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VIEWS OF DUELLING.

PUBLIC opinion, in all the free States of the Union, is so unanimous and strong against duelling, that it may appear superfluous to quote opinions; but it is well, at a time like the present, to strengthen ourselves against this barbarous practice by remembering how the wise and the good have hitherto regarded it.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1805 “unanimously resolved, that they do in the most unequivocal manner declare their utter abhorrence of the practice of duelling, as originating from the malevolent dispositions of the human heart, and a false sense of honor, as a remnant of Gothic barbarism, as a presumptuous and highly criminal appeal to God as the sovereign Judge, as utterly inconsistent with every just principle of moral conduct, as a direct violation of the sixth commandment, and destructive to the peace and happiness of families; and that it be recommended to all ministers under the care of the Assembly, that they scrupulously refuse to attend the funeral of any person who shall have fallen in a duel, and that they admit no person who shall have fought a duel, given or accepted a challenge, or been accessory thereto, unto the distinguishing privileges of the church, until he manifest a just sense of his guilt, and give satisfactory evidence of repentance.” *

We cannot help pausing here to ask, if all these characteristics of duelling are not strictly applicable to war. Is not war a gigantic system of duelling? Does it not in *all* cases spring “from the malevolent dispositions of the human heart, and a false sense of honor?” Let the apostle answer in the passage which assures us, that ‘wars and fightings come from the *lusts* of men.’ Is not this custom, equally with duelling, “a remnant of barbarism?” Is it not “a presumptuous appeal to God,” as if he would take part in such brutal contests? Is it not “utterly inconsistent with every *just* principle of moral conduct?” Does it not “violate the sixth commandment, and destroy the peace and happiness of families?” Every man of common intelligence and candor must answer these questions in the affirmative, and admit that war only multiplies the guilt and evils of duelling by thousands and millions.

* Min. of Gen. Ass., 1805, or Panoplist for July, 1805, vol. I, pp. 76, 77.

But do the ministers of the Prince of peace treat the warrior as they do the duellist? Do they "scrupulously refuse to attend his funeral," and exclude him from "the distinguishing privileges of the church until he give satisfactory evidence of repentance?" No; the very men who brand the duellist as a murderer and an outlaw, eulogize the hero as a favored servant of God, and heir to the blessedness promised in heaven to the peacemaker! Dr. Dwight and Dr. Nott, the most eloquent denouncers of duelling, were among the warmest and wildest panegyrists of our revolutionary heroes; at one moment stigmatising the duellist, and the very next applauding the warrior; now dooming to hell the destroyer of one victim, and anon raising to heaven the butcher of thousands.

The Convention of Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts presented in 1809 a memorial to our Legislature, expressing the opinion, that "the practice of duelling involves a contempt and defiance of the precepts and sanctions of the Christian religion; that it involves the deliberate exposure or destruction of life in utter despite of public authority; that it claims, in behalf of a false and absurd law of honor, originating in times of barbarism and ferocity, the power of annulling and superseding the laws of God and men; that it puts in jeopardy all the peculiar benefits of the social and civilized condition, making the intercourse of men in the same communities a scene of danger and bloodshed, and tending to render wholly unsafe the exercise of liberty of action, and the liberty of debate in public bodies, and of speech in general, as secured to every citizen by the laws of this country. As friends of religion," they pray the Legislature "not to suffer such an affront to Heaven, and such an outrage on the first principles of social order, but to restrain that practice of private revenge which throws the powers of society into the hands of the unprincipled and the desperate. As friends of humanity, they cannot contemplate, without distressing emotions, the domestic terror and suffering inseparable from the prevalence of this barbarous usage."*

How easy the application of all this to the custom of war! Does it not "involve a contempt of the precepts and sanctions of the gospel?" Does it not "deliberately expose or destroy life?" Does it not "claim the power of annulling and superseding the laws of God and men?" Does it not "put in

* Panoplist for June, 1809, vol. II, pp. 22, 23.

jeopardy all the peculiar benefits of the social and civilized condition?" Is it not "an affront to Heaven, and an outrage on the first principles of social order?" Does it not "throw the powers of society into the hands of unprincipled and desperate men?" Is it not invariably attended with "domestic terror and suffering?" How strange that leading minds have for ages overlooked the moral identity of duelling and war!

We designed to give large extracts from the discourses of Dwight, Beecher and Nott, on this subject; but our limits forbid us to do more than record a brief statement of the facts immediately connected with the late tragedy in our capitol.

THE WASHINGTON DUEL.

THE newspapers have made the late duel at Washington so familiar to the whole community, that it may be deemed superfluous to notice it on our pages; but, however unnecessary it may be for any present effect, we wish to record in a more lasting form the main facts of the case.

Col. Webb, editor of a partisan paper in the city of New York, was accused several years ago of having been bribed to change his political party by a loan from the United States Bank. His correspondent in Washington had the last winter brought a vague charge of corruption against certain members of the House of Representatives; and, when a motion was made to investigate the matter, Jonathan Cilley, an administration member from Maine, opposed it on the ground of insufficient authority in the accusation. "This charge," said he, "comes from an editor of a newspaper; and we all know that, in a country where the press is free, few men can expect to escape abuse, and charges of a similar description. I know nothing of this editor; but, if it be the same that made grave charges against an institution of this country, and afterwards was said to have received from it facilities to the amount of some \$52,000, and then gave it his hearty support, I do not think his charges entitled to much credit in an American Congress."

Webb, stung by this allusion, went to Washington, and sent a note to Cilley, demanding an explanation. Cilley would have nothing to do with Webb; and Graves, a Whig member of the House, from Kentucky, and the bearer of Webb's note,